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THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVES EAST RIVER PLAZA APPLICATION TO REDEVELOP THE FORMER WASHBURN WIRE SITE

By a 9-3 Vote, the Major Retail Development Project Heads to the City Council

The City Planning Commission today approved the application for East River Plaza -- the multi-level retail center to be built on the former Washburn Wire Factory site located in East Harlem between 116th - 119th Streets adjacent to the FDR Drive. The East River Plaza will provide approximately 475,000 square feet of retail space -- including two levels for large retail establishments -- and 1,250 parking spaces. The Commission concluded the project would revitalize a long-vacant site and provide a significant economic boost for East Harlem.

In response to issues raised at the City Planning Commission public hearing last month and serious concerns by Commission members, the approved project was substantially revised. The project has been redesigned with significant modifications in urban design and incorporates improved vehicular access and movement to and within the project, improved garage design and operation, safer and more convenient pedestrian improvements, and additional landscaping in adjacent neighborhoods. A predominantly masonry facade and an expanded outdoor seating area with views of the river were also incorporated into the revised project.

The Commission voted 9-3 in favor of the project. The City Council presently has 50 days to act. The project also requires the approval of a state-prepared General Project Plan by the Empire State Development Corporation.